



# Great Lakes VA HEALTHVIEWS

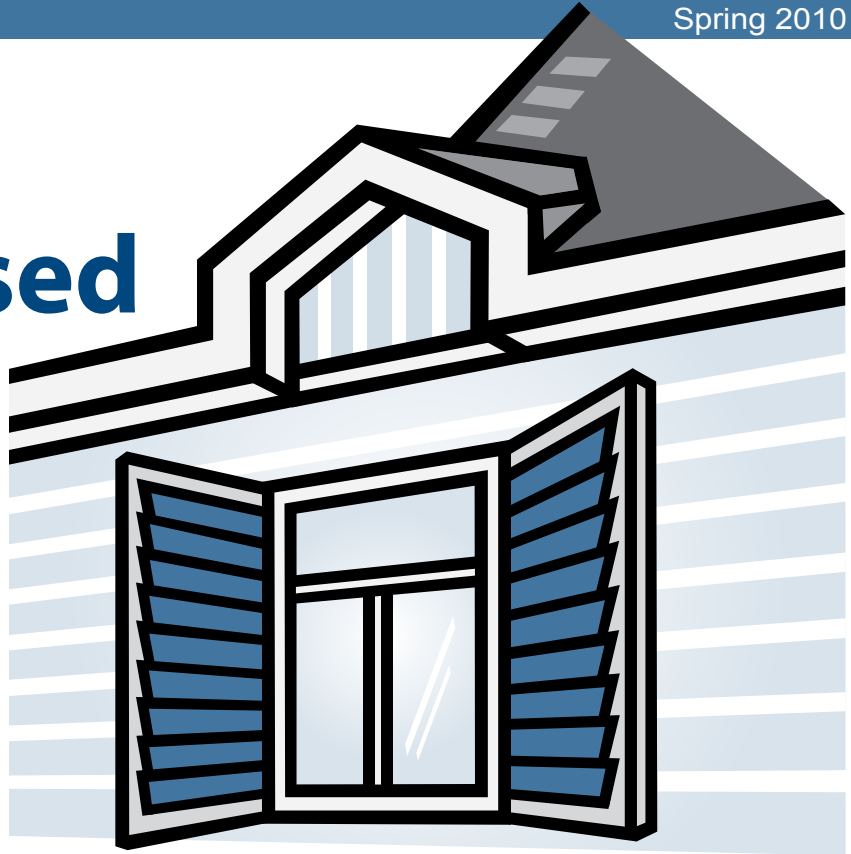
*The Newsletter about Health for Veterans in VISN 12*



Volume 8, Issue 1

Spring 2010

## *What is* **Home-Based Primary Care (HBPC)?**



The job of your Primary Care Team is to help you stay healthy. They treat the whole person, not just one problem.

Primary care has several goals:

- ♦ Preventing and treating illness
- ♦ Providing psychological care
- ♦ Providing health information

Not all Veterans are able to come to a VA facility or CBOC to see their provider. That is where Home-Based Primary Care can be a lifesaver.

### ***Also in this issue...***

#### **HBPC**

Veteran Interview .....Page 4

Krames Online  
(electronic health  
information) .....Page 5

Vitamin D.....Page 6

*(continued on page 2)*



## **Who can receive Home-Based Primary Care (HBPC)?**

Veterans who have complicated health problems may be eligible for HBPC. They are not able to come to the hospital or clinic because they are bedridden or use a wheelchair. They may not be able to move from one place to another without the help of another person.

Veterans with these types of health problems often receive Home-Based Primary Care:

- ◀ Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- ◀ Dementia or other mental health conditions
- ◀ Heart conditions
- ◀ Diabetes
- ◀ Cancer

## **How does a Veteran get into HBPC?**

Veterans are referred to HBPC by their VA health care provider. The HBPC team will assess the Veteran's needs and determine if HBPC is the best option.

The HBPC team may decide home is the most appropriate place to receive care, if the Veteran:

- ◀ has many health problems that require care from the interdisciplinary team in order to function
- ◀ has a very hard time coming to the clinic because of health problems
- ◀ accepts the help of the HBPC team for his or her primary care
- ◀ has needs that are within the scope of the services of HBPC
- ◀ has a home that is safe for the Veteran, caregiver, and HBPC staff

## **Who sees the Veteran in the home?**

HBPC works best when there is a team of professionals. The HBPC Team may include:

- ◀ Physician
- ◀ Pharmacist
- ◀ Nurses and Nurse Practitioners
- ◀ Psychologist
- ◀ Social Worker
- ◀ Dietitian/Nutritionist
- ◀ Occupational Therapist
- ◀ Physical Therapist
- ◀ Chaplain

## What services are provided by HBPC?

- Medical care (a physical examination)
- Nursing care and education
- Rehabilitation services
- Nutritional counseling
- Social work services
- Pharmacy/medication support
- Bereavement support

- Emergency care
- Medicines that are given through an IV (intravenous)
- Diagnostic tests or treatment such as X-rays, surgery, or blood transfusions
- Personal care assistance, such as help with bathing. However, HBPC staff can help the Veteran get the help of a home-health aide.

## What is NOT covered by HBPC?

HBPC does not provide assisted-living or nursing home care. If nursing home placement is necessary, HBPC can help the Veteran and caregivers make the necessary arrangements.

HBPC does not provide:

- Daily visits and daily care
- Housekeeping, meals, or transportation

---

Submitted by:  
Elizabeth Lindner, PhD, APNP  
Licensed Psychologist  
Advanced Practice Nurse Prescriber/Mental Health  
Tomah VAMC



# HOME CARE CORNER

## **The following is from an interview with an 85-year-old Veteran in the HBPC program.**

The VA has been awfully good to me. At home, they got me the bars for the bathroom and that chair. It's got power. I could sleep in it. I could get in and out of it because it lifts you right up. I got a scooter so I could ride around town and I have special shoes and stockings for my diabetes.

I have a nurse that comes in. She's so good. She counts my pills, weighs me, checks my heart, and tells me a lot of things that I had to be reminded of. She always shakes my hand and cheers me up.

That chaplain, he comes to visit too. That's great. I'd miss him if he didn't come.

The dietitian is always watching what I eat. She looks in the refrigerator and tells me to eat more vegetables.

Last year, I lost my hearing aid. She crawled under the bed because she could hear it and I couldn't hear it. She found it.

And they will call my kids for me and if there's something wrong she tells them.

Yes, HBPC does a lot for me."





## **VISN 12 offers another source of reliable health information for our Veterans**

*Introducing...*

Trusted health information at your finger tips. Using Krames Online will help you become a more well-informed patient!

This website gives you access to:

- ◆ Hundreds of health videos
- ◆ Over 1800 Health Sheets to learn more about health conditions, procedures, disease management and wellness
- ◆ Medication Sheets to learn more about the medicines your provider has prescribed for you

You will need a computer with internet access. Go to the Patient Education page of your VA Facility. Along with other useful information, you will find the link to Krames On Line.

### **Hines**

<http://www.hines.va.gov/patients/patiented.asp>

### **Iron Mountain**

<http://www.ironmountain.va.gov/patients/patiented.asp>

### **Jesse Brown**

<http://www.chicago.va.gov/patients/patiented.asp>

### **Madison**

<http://www.madison.va.gov/pat/perc.asp>

### **Milwaukee**

<http://www.milwaukee.va.gov/patients/patiented.asp>

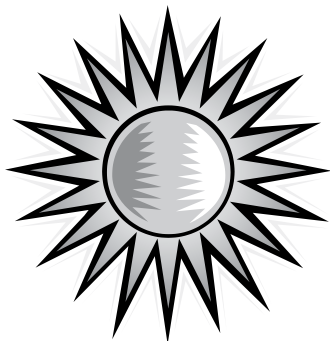
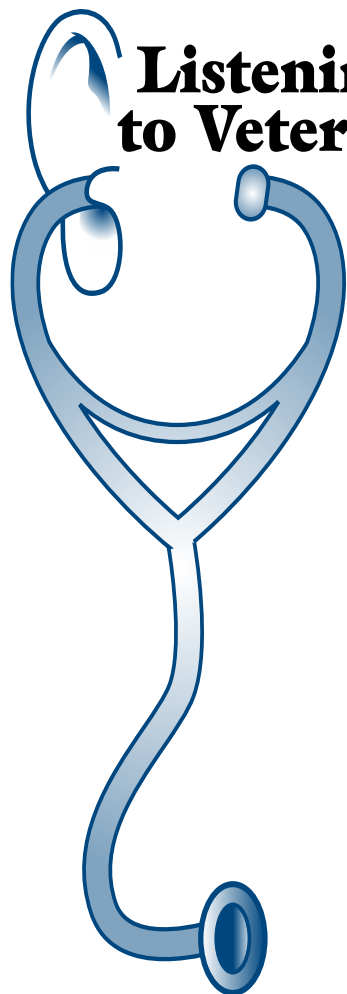
### **North Chicago**

<http://www.northchicago.va.gov/patients/patiented.asp>

### **Tomah**

<http://www.tomah.va.gov/> (click on Krames Patient Education link on the left side of the main page)





## **Vitamin D**

### **Are You at Risk?**

Many people who live in the Midwest have low vitamin D levels. Your body makes vitamin D from sunlight, but during winter months, we don't get enough sun.

In addition, as you age, your body can't make vitamin D from sunlight as well as it did when you were younger. This increases your risk of vitamin D deficiency.

Your body needs vitamin D to absorb calcium. Calcium is needed to keep your bones strong. Vitamin D is also important for maintaining muscle mass.

---

Answered by:  
Katie Merriman, RD  
Home Care Dietitian  
Milwaukee VAMC

### **Low levels of vitamin D have been linked to:**

- ☼ Falls
- ☼ Depression
- ☼ Cancer
- ☼ Diabetes
- ☼ High blood pressure
- ☼ Bone fractures
- ☼ Congestive heart failure



## Recommendations:

- Drink 2 to 3 (8-ounce) glasses of milk daily. Skim, 1%, 2% and whole milk all have 100 IUs of vitamin D per cup. You can also get some vitamin D in fortified cereals, juices and yogurts.
- It is difficult to get enough vitamin D from food alone. A supplement is the easiest way to get the recommended daily amount of vitamin D. You can buy vitamin D supplements over-the-counter. 1000 to 2000 IUs per day is the recommended amount. If you have any questions about supplements, ask your health care provider or dietitian.



- If you are lactose intolerant or don't like dairy products, you should consider taking both calcium and vitamin D.
- During the summer months, get some sun (without sunscreen) for 10 minutes daily or 20 minutes 3 times per week.
- You may want to ask your health care provider about testing your vitamin D levels.

Source:

Holick MF, 2009. Review Article: Vitamin D Deficiency. New England Journal of Medicine, 357, 266-281.

## HELP A FELLOW VET

**Always CALL to  
cancel or  
reschedule**



**if you can't keep  
your appointment!**





**Great Lakes VA  
Healthviews Editorial  
Committee:**

Jill Zahn  
Senior Editor  
Milwaukee VAMC

Kathleen Ford  
Hines VAH

Sherry Aichner  
Iron Mountain VAMC

Levi Laroco  
Jesse Brown VAMC

Gail Meissen  
Madison VAMC

Alfreda Rhodes-King  
North Chicago VAMC

Kathy Johnson  
Tomah VAMC

Kim Chapman  
Layout and Design  
Milwaukee VAMC

**Important note: We are not able to mail this newsletter to you. It can be found in waiting rooms of your VA Medical Center and outpatient clinics.**

You can also subscribe to the electronic version of this newsletter by going to the VISN 12 webpage [www.visn12.va.gov](http://www.visn12.va.gov) Click on the Newsletters link on the left side of the page.



*Your best source for information about your health will always be your health care team. We hope this newsletter will encourage you to ask questions about your health concerns.*

**Phone Numbers for VISN 12 Hospitals**

Hines:	708-202-8387
Iron Mountain:	906-774-3300
Jesse Brown:	312-569-8387
Madison:	608-256-1901
Milwaukee:	1-888-469-6614
North Chicago:	1-800-393-0865
Tomah:	1-800-872-8662

***"Ask An Expert"* Question  
or Idea for Future Articles**

Do you have an "Ask An Expert" question or an idea for a future article? Your ideas can be e-mailed or mailed to the Senior Editor.

**E-mail address:**

SrEditorGreatLakesVAHealthviews@va.gov

**Mailing address:**

Jill Zahn  
Milwaukee VA Medical Center Library  
5000 W. National Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53295

VISN 12 VA Healthcare facilities are accredited by The Joint Commission. Joint Commission evaluates healthcare facilities on quality, safety of patient care and safety of the environment.

If you have any concerns about patient care or safety in your facility, first contact the person in charge. If your concern cannot be resolved, the VA encourages you to contact Joint Commission. You may request a "public information interview." Requests can be made to:

Division of Accreditation Operations  
Office of Quality Monitoring  
The Joint Commission  
One Renaissance Boulevard  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181  
1-800-994-6610